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SUBJECT: TAEK PRESIDENT ON HEU FUEL EXCHANGE AND SISTER
LABORATORIES PROGRAM

REF: A. 06 STATE 166038

[1](#)B. STATE 16413

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Turkish Atomic Energy Authority (TAEK) President Okay Cakiroglu stated TAEK is open to discussing areas for peaceful nuclear cooperation, including repatriation of HEU current held at the Cekmece Nuclear Research Center and the USG-proposed nuclear laboratory-to-laboratory ("Sister Laboratories") program. He said TAEK would prefer a coherent plan for bilateral cooperation, rather than the current disjointed approach, and inquired about the status of U.S. ratification of the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (PUNE) treaty. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) In the course of February 28 meetings with Embassy officials and visiting USG scientists (septel), Cakiroglu said TAEK is willing to cooperate with the United States in all areas of peaceful nuclear energy, noting a long history of bilateral exchanges. TAEK is ready to consider multiple levels of nuclear cooperation, from the organizational level to that of the individual scientist. He stated his conviction that broad cooperation in the nuclear field is essential to countering the illegal or improper use of nuclear technology that endangers our collective security.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Cakiroglu confirmed TAEK interest in restarting discussions on the return of the HEU fuel assemblies currently being used at the Cekmece Nuclear Research Center (ref b). He understands that, in the absence of a PUNE treaty, the origin of the replacement fuel will most likely be France. Cakiroglu is willing to meet with USG officials in early April to discuss the possibility of a fuel exchange later this year.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Cakiroglu added that TAEK is also interested in DOE's proposed laboratory-to-laboratory information exchange program (Sister Laboratories Program - ref a), believing this type of program can be beneficial to all. He noted that TAEK now has two research laboratories in operation: Cekmece Nuclear Research Laboratory and a second one in Ankara. He welcomed the opportunity to more fully discuss this program and other areas of possible cooperation.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Referring to the PUNE treaty, Cakiroglu inquired about delays in U.S. ratification. He stated that TAEK looks forward to the comprehensive bilateral nuclear cooperation that the treaty would allow rather than the current piecemeal project-by-project approach.

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